

Pandemic Outbreak Issues

Communicating the Risk – In Search of the Middle Ground

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The Dilemma for Public Health Leaders ... Balance

“Officials don’t want to be accused of needlessly frightening the public. They also don’t want to be accused later of leaving the public unprepared for a disaster.”¹

Communication Guide Lines

- ① **Trust**
- ② **Announce Early**
- ③ **Transparency**
- ④ **The Public**
- ⑤ **Planning**

Communication Guide Lines

① Trust

“...Communicate with the public in ways that build, maintain, and restore trust.”²

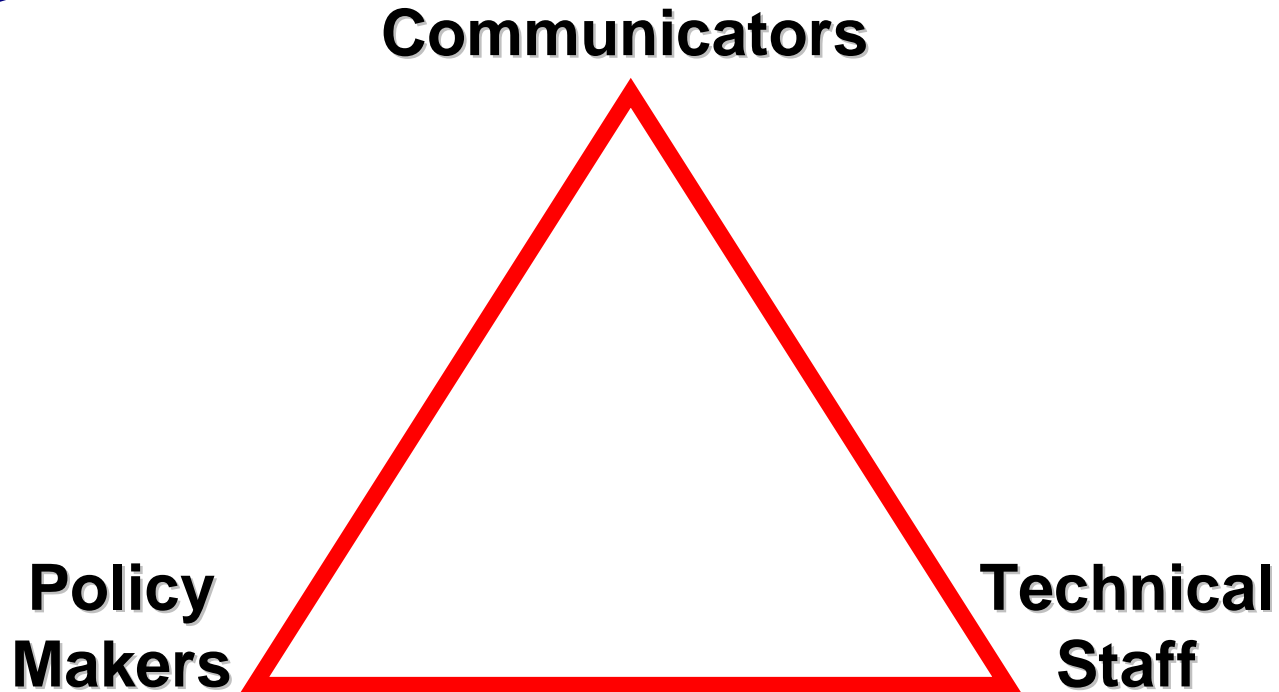
Communication Guide Lines

① Trust

- **Counter intuitive**
- **Public panic is rare when people have been candidly informed.**
- **Acknowledge the unknown, and incomplete situation... “we don’t know” is acceptable.**

Communication Guide Lines

① Trust



② Announcing Early

“The parameters of trust are established in the outbreak’s first official announcement... timing, candor and comprehensiveness make it the most important of all outbreak communications.”²

③ Transparency

“Transparency characterizes the relationship between the outbreak managers and the public. It allows the public to “view” the information-gathering, risk-assessing and decision making process associated with outbreak control.”²

4 The Public

“...it is nearly impossible to design successful messages that bridge the gap between the expert and the public without knowing what the public thinks.”²

4 The Public

- **Communication Surveillance**
- **Communication = Dialogue**
- **What can the public do to make themselves safer**

5 Planning

“The decisions and actions of public health officials have more effect on trust and public risk perception than communications.”
